2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

lectful and took little interest in securing a "guardian spirit," the mother's brother would tease him and tell him he was bringing dishonor to his clan and suggest that, to be rich and honored, he must begin fasting. He would collect goods for his sister's son and instruct him that he should go out on the hills and fast, using the goods on his return to pay his "clan father" for interpreting the dream. The mother's brother also supervised the fasting of the young boys of ten to fourteen years of age, selecting an isolated place at a short distance from the village where the boys were sheltered in a temporary brush lodge and instructed in the proper procedures for inducing visions.

Children acquired an attitude of respect for the sacred objects of the lodge while young, first by being scolded for playing near the platform on which the bundles were kept, and later by observation of a fixed ritualistic behavior by the parents when the bundles were opened. They were taught that the bundles "protected" them until they were old enough to own "gods" of their own and were informed that their success was in direct proportion to the number and potency of "gods" owned. Children who would inherit or assist in the performance of certain tribal bundle rites received special training beginning when they were ten or twelve years of age. They were also expected to fast often and establish personal bundles based on heir supernatural experiences.

Fasting was a prerequisite to participation in the organized war expeditions. One would conclude from an examination of the mythology that a young man, after his first experience with the supernatural, organized a war expedition immediately and served as leader. In examining the war records of a number of Mandan, it was found that none would have followed a young man receiving his first vision experience and that, even as a member of a recognized war leader's party, he would be "camp tender," bringing wood and water to the camp, preparing the food, and waiting on the leader during the performance of the rites appertaining to warfare. When he was alert and anticipated the needs of the leader and was not lazy, he was promoted to scout and in company with others of that rank was sent out ahead of the main party each morning to look for the enemy or horses. It was while serving as scout that a young man received

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

his fundamental training in warfare. In company with other young men, and frequently afoot, whereas the main party was on horseback, they were required to travel ahead, watching from high buttes, and by means of signals to report the presence of an enemy or horses. It was necessary for the scouts to keep in touch with their leader, who, in turn, was intrusted with the duty of relaying information to the main body. New scouts were taught the proper posture when running to prevent premature exhaustion, and there were contests between scouts to determine their relative durability in reaching distant lookout points. The leader of the scouts reported the winners to the leader, who praised them publicly when the party returned to the village. The old women then sang their victory songs while the old men encouraged more fasting.

A sister was taught that fasting while her brother was away on war expeditions would bring him success in "striking the enemy" or capturing horses. She would take quill work with her at daybreak and leave the village for a low hill or mound or recline on a platform in the garden where she would cry for his success, addressing her prayers to all the holy things. If the expedition was long overdue, she would go to the scaffolds of deceased relatives or skull circles to weep, returning to her lodge each evening. Successful war parties returned to the village at daybreak, and she would leave her lodge immediately to meet her brother. If he had captured horses, the best animal was presented to her. This was equivalent to presenting the horse to all the females of his mother's lodge. These females, on the other hand, were the principal mourners if he were killed, and the married sisters were expected to undergo extreme self-inflicted torture by gashing their bodies, cutting off the ends of fingers, cutting their hair, and shortening their dresses.

Their brothers fasted four, seven, or nine days without food or water, remaining outside the village in some secluded spot for the full period of the fast. From time to time, the father would send a clan brother to observe whether his son was endangering his life, and he could stop the fast if in his opinion the young man's self-torture was excessive. A young man returning from fasting which had not induced a vision was given an object from his father's bundle to carry on war expeditions and

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785 159 223 top of my bait, and I stuck my right hand out and caught him. He was a big beautiful eagle, and that was the result I got for my suffering the night before. Before I finished killing him, another big one came down on top of my pit and walked over to the bait. I caught him as I had the other one and pulled him into the pit where I killed him, and there was never a happier person than I. I forgot all about my pains. I was happy as I thought of what I had done the night before. I did not have to go very far to get results for the suffering I did the night before. After that the leader said, since I was lucky, I should get up mornings and look at the flag to see if the winds were right.

787 785 159 If a man goes out on the hills to fast and suffer and some holy person or animal comes to him and tells him that he will be lucky and kill an enemy, but when he goes out as leader, the enemy kills one of his party instead, he will come home crying because the people will think that he didn't fast right or that his dream wasn't real. Brave men will start fasting again and seek an even stronger god by fasting longer and offering their flesh to the Sun. The older men watch one who has lost a warrior when he fasts. If the suffering is too severe, men of his father's clan pay him to stop for fear that he will kill himself. After he has suffered a while, the parents of the warrior who was killed in battle will give a feast to the man and ask him to stop. When a leader goes out to war as a result of the promise of a certain animal and loses one of his men, he will reject that animal's vision instructions if sent to him again in a dream. He will keep on fasting until another god comes to him. It is often hard to get men to follow an unlucky leader. If he goes out a second time and kills or strikes an enemy, the people will say, "You have a real protector now, one that is going to be a great help to you."

My god is the horse. When I was a young man, I led a horse around the sacred cedar standing in the center of Like-a-Fishhook Village by means of thongs in my flesh until I fell down unconscious. As I lay there, a horse came to me and promised me success in hunting and warfare. I killed two enemies a long ways from home because of this dream. The horse sang me his sacred songs, but I am not allowed to sing them for you. I have done all the things the horse asked of me, and the horse has done everything he promised me he would. The doctoring you saw me do did not come from the instructions the horse gave me. The sharp stick I used for letting out matter came from my rights in the Big Bird ceremony my sisters and I bought of Big Black, my father's brother.

●726 159 I can illustrate by a story how a man organizes a war party to go out for the enemy that his god has promised him. The leader is careful to do just as he was instructed.

The party was to leave from Fishhook Village. The leaders were Old Bear (Tamisik clan), Crows Breast (Tamisik clan), and Porcupine Head (Speckled Eagle clan). I joined the party because of a suggestion by Afraid To Be Chief [his mother's brother and head of the lodge at that time] that he had no horses. If we got horses, we would be pretty well fixed. When a party of this kind is made up, they do not announce it but act quietly in preparation for the trip. A night was set to leave. Those planning to join got together a supply of moccasins and food. A lodge was designated as our meeting place. The party met this time in Two Chief's lodge. Others came to look on and wish us luck so that the lodge was packed full of people.

In addition to the leaders mentioned already, there were these warriors in the party: Big Steal (Tamisik clan), Long Tail (Prairie Chicken clan), Afraid

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To Be Chief (Prairie Chicken clan), Raven Turns (WaxikEna clan), Bear Chief (Prairie Chicken clan), Short Bears Teeth (Tamisik clan), Crows Heart (Prairie Chicken clan), Tree Bark (Tamisik clan), and Crow (Prairie Chicken clan).

We met at Two Chief's lodge, since he was a brother-in-law of Crows Breast, one of the Old Wolves. We had enough bullboats in readiness to carry the party down the river. It was planned that the party should sing the songs belonging to the whole group[4] before leaving. All of us wore a white piece of cloth for a headgear and a white cloak reaching to the knees. While singing the songs, we made a noise by "hitting the mouth"; this brought a great crowd of onlookers. While we were singing, a heavy shower of rain fell, and water ran everywhere in small torrents. The leaders decided not to go that night; they would wait until the next evening just at sunset.

When the schedule was changed, each of us took up his medicine bundle and equipment and left the lodge. Upon reaching our earth lodge, I lay aside my medicine bag and moccasins and went out of the village to attend to my horses. While there I met an Hidatsa named Puts Away His Hair, who said he was organizing a war party of his own and wanted me to go along as a Young Wolf [scout].

He said, "When I was making the ceremony, my gods gave me one tepee at a place called Cedars Facing Each Other [southwest of the present town of Dickinson, North Dakota]."

When he said that, I was undecided what to do. I thought it over for a long time and finally decided to go with him as a Young Wolf. I had already left a bullboat with the other party. I prepared to leave immediately with the newly organized party. It did not take me long to get ready, since I had only to fetch my horse. My medicine bundle and moccasins were already packed for the other expedition I had planned accompanying. In a short time I plunged my horse into the muddy waters of the Missouri at a point just below the village and swam him to the opposite shore where we were to meet. It was late spring, and the river was quite high. Big Steal also changed over to this party.

We went to a sand bar to wait for the party. We were told that we would wait for him there, but we did not know who he meant. We later learned that they meant Four Bears, whom you are named after.

The leaders of Old Wolves were: Puts Away His Hair (Water-buster clan, Hidatsa), Sitting Elk (Water-buster clan, Hidatsa), Four Bears (Prairie Chicken clan, Hidatsa), and Shaved Forehead (Water-buster clan, Hidatsa). The others of the party were: Yellow Robe (Prairie Chicken clan, Hidatsa), Foolish Man (Tamisik clan, Louie Baker's brother, Mandan), Rattlesnake (Tamisik clan, Mandan), No Arm (Tamisik clan, Mandan), and Crows Heart (Prairie Chicken clan, nineteen years old, Mandan).

The route we took was a little east of the present post office of Defiance by Lake Gap [Mandan name]. There were plenty of antelope, and we had enough meat. Our route took us by Red Bank, where we made our first camp. From there we went directly toward the present site of the town of Dickinson and on the second night stopped on the river bottoms there. Next day we went on to Rose Bud Ground to the southwest. From our camp there, we climbed the grass-covered buttes from which we saw the hill called Home-of-the-Buffalo,

4. I.e., society songs.

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the place where the animals were believed to come out. Some of the party decided to go there to look at the place. On reaching Home-of-Buffalo Hill some of us looked around for the blue clay used for painting our faces and known to be plentiful there. On top of the hill there was a deep crack in the ground, and we could see the buffalo spirits' tracks in there, for it was well packed down. On the west side we came to a great cavity half-full of bones. There were so many bones there I think the animals must have been killed by lightning.

This was the same summer that Custer's party went through the country [1876]. Their army went just a little to the west of the hill and made a regular road. We went there to see their trail. When we came to where it went down to the Little Missouri River, we found skeletons of mules, wrecked and abandoned wagons, and much other material discarded by the army. Their trail was plain, so we followed it all the way to the Little Missouri. Just before crossing the Little Missouri, we went through rough country. There we found oats, clothing, and harness; it looked as though the men had spent a long time there making the road. We found good bridles, reins, and tents which we took. All of us were well supplied. From there we rode to Like-a-Chicken-Tail Butte. This was one of the places where we usually got red paint. All in the party said they would need it when they captured the one lodge. From there we followed the west bank of the Little Missouri River a ways, then crossed and camped on the bank, all the time going up the river. The country abounded with elk, antelope, and blacktail deer. We were never short of meat.

Soon we could see Cedars Facing Each Other Buttes. There we killed two elk, for we were afraid we might not find the tepee at once and might need meat while we were scouting around for it. There we built a sweat lodge and dried our meat in it with heated stones, for we did not dare shoot game when in the vicinity of the enemy. The scouts constantly traveled ahead of us, headed by Yellow Robe and assisted by Foolish Man and Rattlesnake. On the third day after drying the elk meat, they came back running to inform us that they had found where a tepee had been and that the coals were still hot. They said they could still see the place where the horses had been picketed.

When Puts Away His Hair reached the site of the tepee, he went to the west side of the tepee ring to fast and cry. He cried until the next noon.

Then he pointed to the Sun and said, "Old Man, what you have given me, you have also taken away." Then he turned to the Young Wolves and said, "Now, my Young Wolves, this is the place designated by my medicine. It would not be good policy to follow this enemy. We could catch him at his next stop but that would be beyond the authority given me by my medicine. I might be harmed and some of you Young Wolves might be killed. Young Wolves, I am going to turn back, but you may go on if you wish. Old Man gave me this lodge (one family), but now he has taken it back again."

When he made that decision, Sitting Elk[5] decided to go on as leader and took with him Yellow Robe, Foolish Man, and No Arm. They went on for one day when they found the camp fire again burning. Sitting Elk was leader, but he decided that in view of the fact that another had been given the lodge, it would be dangerous to them.

He said, "By the looks of things, the enemy is wise to us. I don't want to

5. Hidatsa Hide-beating bundle-owner.

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

lose any Young Wolves. It would be a blur to my record to 'kick the stone' so I am going back." The others returned with him. 726 159

When we came back, there was nothing of importance until we reached the Killdeer Mountains, where a Sioux war party saw us. We took the middle of the flat east of the Killdeer Mountains, and one of the party killed an antelope. We wasted no time pulling the hide off, and went right on to Red Paint Creek. I laid the hide out to dry to use on my horse that had a sore back. While we were roasting the meat, a whirlwind took the hide up into the air and whirled it, all the time with the flat side down.

When it happened, we said as a joke, "The enemy is upon us," but each of us jumped onto his horse and followed the creek down to the Little Missouri. We did not stop until we reached Cedar Butte, four miles above Hans Creek, when we went into an elm thicket to rest the horses. While there, an owl came and hooted. The enemy had outnumbered us ten to one and had been watching us from the Killdeer Mountains. They thought they had us, but it was the whirlwind that saved us. It was almost a miracle that we escaped the enemy. [The enemy was never seen but was merely suspected by the signs.] From our camp in Hans Creek we left at dawn without food and rode until we reached Manure Creek, where we grazed our horses in a clearing in the woods and cooked meat. We reached Like-a-Fishhook Village at sunset.

Puts Away His Hair got no credit for the lodge even though he found it just where his medicine said it would be.

The Mandan distinguished two kinds of supernatural experiences, those which were received through dreams and those actually seen, the latter being considered the more reliable. Crows Heart thought that what one actually saw could be depended on, whereas all dreams were not real. Scattercorn told of a Mandan who was visiting the Crow Indians. She said: "A friend took him to the top of a high mountain. While there a storm came up so they sought shelter under a cliff. During the night Thunderbird came by with his wings straight out. The lightning came out of his neck, and, when he moved his wings ever so little, it thundered. This Mandan really saw this bird, and it was his guardian after that." 787

All women fasted at least once during their lifetime. Self-torture was rarely practiced except in unusual instances. Scattercorn recalled an instance when three brothers were killed by the Cheyennes, who had been in the village exchanging robes for corn. When they left, they met men coming back loaded with meat. No precautions were taken when they saw the Cheyennes, since they knew what their mission had been. The brothers of the slain men fasted and practiced self-torture to get supernatural aid. When the war party left, one sister cut off two fingers 785 562

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Chapter XIII

THE SHELL ROBE BUNDLE

778 THIS bundle was spoken of as the Shell Robe of the Holy Women to distinguish it from other Holy Women bundles. Traditionally, the robe originated in Yellow Dog's village of Awatixa and reached the Mandan by intermarriage a long time ago, while the Mandan were still living in the Heart River region. The bundle consisted of a tanned piece of elkhide approximately two feet square to which were attached pieces of human scalps and clam shells set in rows. The hair had been removed from the hide, and a piece of scalp and a clam shell were fastened together in some manner not clear to informants, before being attached to the robe. A star representing the morning star was painted on the center of the robe. The bundle also contained magpie tail feathers, a braid of sweet grass, an ash digging stick, a buffalo-bull skull, and a plain wooden pipe. These, except the buffalo skull, were kept in a buffalo-hide sack. The bundle was one of a number having its mythological origin from the Holy Women, being so identified by the presence of magpie tail feathers, braids of sweet grass, and the ash digging stick.

778 773 726 This was the most widely known of the Holy Women myths. Those having other Holy Women bundle rights could sell the story independently of the Shell Robe bundle. Bear on the Flat, whose mother had rights in the Woman in Dog Den bundle, claimed rights in this bundle by virtue of rights in a Holy Woman bundle. This was primarily a war bundle, and feasts given by men leading war parties were of frequent occurrence. The feasts entitled them to have an image erected before the giver's lodge and to have given them some article from the bundle by the Shell Robe owner. The article was carried on war expeditions and prayed to during the performance of the war rituals when away from the village. The number of feasts that could be given or the number of times articles associated with the bundle could be given out was unlimited. The blessings of the Holy Women

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

were sought, since these women went out at night, according to the myths, to fight and to incite fights between the Mandan and their own people or the enemy in order to have people to eat. They were described as cannibals in all the myths.

The peculiar ceremonial pattern and traditional history of the bundle, in a large measure, explained the general knowledge of the myths belonging to the ritual. The bundle-owner and his wives could sell the story. Owners of all bundles in which were represented Holy Women, consisting of Buffalo Woman, Old Woman Above (Sun's mother), Woman in Dog Den Buttes, Old Woman Who Never Dies, and Striped Scalp (Sun's sister), were included in this group. Traditionally, the myth survived when the Hidatsa sold the bundle. Those who had bought the right to hear the story could in turn retell when payment was made. Those who had made offerings to the robe could learn the story and retell it upon payment of goods. The bundle was normally transferred from parents to sons and daughters if they were living and wanted it; otherwise to a daughter and her husband, inheritance being in the Prairie Chicken clan. Transfer was made at a public feast, but the preliminary instructions were direct between buyer and seller and in secret. The people of the Prairie Chicken clan of Awatixa and the Mandan villages claimed rights to the bundle.

When doing ethnological work with Mandan informants, it was evident that there was no hesitation in giving information on this ceremony, as was the case with the People Above ceremony. There was no reference to punishing people with insanity, paralysis, and other afflictions, as was the case with the People Above mythology, in spite of the fact that the female characters represented were believed to be members of the Holy Women band. These women, although cannibals and evil in character, were often represented in the mythology as kind, sending fog to conceal their movements while they brought meat into the Mandan villages and loaded down the corn scaffolds during times of famine. People were not permitted to speak in a loud voice in the lodge where the bundle was kept, and mice that ran over it were said to have died.

During the last century the bundle and its owners have occupied an important place in the traditional history of the Man-

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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had been shot six times; some wore a wooden knife, a sign they had killed an enemy with a knife. Maximilian describes one man, a chief, whose face was painted half yellow and half red, with stripes made by rubbing the color off; his arms had seventeen lines showing the number of his deeds, and on his breast, in yellow, was a hand showing that he had made prisoners.

When a youth first wished to lead a war party he at once acquired a medicine. Then he solicited his young men friends by presents and assurances of the efficacy of his medicine and after feasts and dances he departed with as many followers as he could get. In the large war parties there were four real leaders and sometimes three others called bad leaders. Each real leader carried a medicine pipe in a case on his back. To become a chief it was necessary to begin as a war party leader, then to kill a man while in a party where the candidate was not a leader. Again, while following another leader, he must be the first to discover the enemy and kill one of them, and lastly he must have owned at some time a white buffalo hide. Each warrior carried about his neck the whistle of his band, and at the moment of falling upon the enemy these were blown and the war-cry was sounded.

The Mandans seldom took male prisoners but even when taken they were never tortured. As soon as a prisoner had entered the village and eaten corn he was considered as one of the nation; the women, however, could go out and meet the returning party and kill the prisoners then. Scalps were dried and used in decoration. When a successful war party returned they were met by the women and children who entered the village with them dancing the scalp dance. The warriors painted the face, and often the whole body, black, and the scalp dance was danced in the medicine lodge four nights, then later in the middle of the village. If no Mandan was killed in the campaign, the dance was kept up for six months.

In all these war customs we find nothing more than the general plains ideas such as were found in all the Sioux tribes and among most of their neighbors.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
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575 293 [302] Mouths were also called "Brave Men's society." They painted their faces black. The Goose women used the same paint, because their society was founded by the same man. When the time came for singing, the first rattler walked ahead and began to sing. Then the drummers took up the song. The next time the second rattler acted in the same manner. The raven-lance bearers had a special song and dance, during which they crossed each other's path.

575 726 554 533 535 One summer, when the society wished to give a performance because some Sioux were coming to fight, they stuck two tipi poles into the ground, and tied raven-lances to the top. One of the Soldiers cried, "Kā! Kā! Kā!" This was in imitation of crows. Then some other member went outside the lodge to see which one had cried. Returning, he said, "It is not a living raven, but the raven head on Skunk's lance." Skunk was a very brave man. The people said, "We will find out what this means." Then someone took the lances down, and returned them to their owners. Skunk said, "Hold on, my fellow-members, I wish to know the reason why my lance is singing." He got his associate to accompany him, and both lance officers then went through the village, singing this song: —

"kē'ka, nasarā'rōoca. mī' ō 'watē'roc.
"Raven, you sing. I want to die.
"kika're e'henik, ō'ota."
"If you are afraid, go away."

The people hearing Skunk thought him braver than ever. They said to him, "This is your day, do what you wish best." The people encouraged Skunk. When the society started outdoors for a dance, Skunk took the lead, and again sang. A circle was formed. All the people came to watch the performance. Skunk once more sang his song. He danced alone, in a slanting line. These were the words of his song: —

"mīnukarité, nū'tamina'tare hū'miikāc. i'miinahèc."
"My friends, our enemies are numerous. I am used to it" [that is, to fight].

When the time came to fight, Skunk struck many coups. This is what the singing of the raven had indicated.

575 626 In addition to the police functions described by Maximilian, Wounded-face mentions a special duty devolving on the two pipe-bearers. When some villager wished to kill a fellow-tribesman, these officers filled up a pipe, and gave him presents in order to make him desist. Acceptance signified acquiescence in their wishes.

575 Water-chief became a Black Mouth, together with about twenty of his comrades, at thirty; generally, however, the members were older. They

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
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Old Dog Society.[1]

Maximilian, while not including this society in his list of age-classes, states that the Old Dog dance was one which the Dogs might buy of the Bulls before they were permitted to become Bulls. The Old Dog dancers painted their bodies white, and their hands red and black. They wore a grizzly skin round the body, and on the head feathers which hung down in the back.

Wounded-face knew nothing of the organization save the name. He had heard that they dressed similarly to the Dogs.

Coarse Hair Society.

Wounded-face had only heard of this society (bacā'ca ō'xat'e) from his grandfather. There was something sacred about it. A young man going on the warpath promised the members to give them a dance provided he performed some brave deed in battle. When dancing, the members dressed up. On the head they placed a piece of scalp from a buffalo head of the size of a human scalp. Hair was attached to the scalp so as to hang over the members' faces. They put honor-marks on their clothes. The left leggings were painted red up to the knee, and black marks were put round the lower legs as a sign that the wearer had struck many enemies. Leaders in war who had killed enemies tied human hair to the leggings. For each enemy struck in war, a member put one feather on his head. If he had been wounded by an arrow, the split feather from an arrow, dyed red, was worn on the head. A gun wound was indicated by a stick about 9 inches in length, and whittled at the lower end so that the shavings remained on the stick. The young warrior providing for the entertainment of the performers filled a pipe for them, and, if possible, presented them with horses or eagle feather bonnets. He asked them to pray for him. All the older men rejoiced in such a feast.

It is possible, but by no means certain, that this society corresponds to Maximilian's As-Cho'h-O'chatā (Ascho'-O'chatā). On the 23rd of December, 1833, a large number of Indians visited the Fort, led by fourteen members of this society from the village of Ruptare. The entire head was covered with a wig of long, flat braids of hair, which fell over the face, completely hiding it. Feathers of the owl, raven, and of birds of prey,

[1] minis' xixe' ō'xat'e.